

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 21 Issue 21 2013-06-07

Underbooked

E-text initiative

True Lies

All's fair in fiction

Mea culpa

Breaking the silence

*Plus:
From Where I Sit
In Conversation
and much more!*



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Magazine***

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The Voice is published
every Friday in HTML and
PDF format.

For weekly email
reminders as each issue is
posted, fill out the
subscription form [here](#).

The Voice does not share
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We love to hear from you! Send your questions and
comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please
indicate if we may publish your letter.



A BOOK IN THE HAND: E-TEXT INITIATIVE

Christina M. Frey



Prefer to cozy up with a Kindle or Nook? Love flipping through onscreen pages on your iPad? Enjoy the ease of reading the same book across devices?

Or do your eyes glaze over when you try to read e-text? Do you prefer the feel of a hard copy, the rustle of pages and the familiar weight?

The answer is as individual as the reader—and we're just talking about reading for pleasure. When it's a matter of reading for learning, a whole host of other questions come into play.

While some are comfortable learning in an all-online setting, others find screen displays visually difficult to navigate or generally distracting. And according to researchers, it's more than just personal preference; educational professionals are still debating whether missing out on things like spatial memory will affect students' ability

to understand rather than merely memorize the material. In some subject areas, like math and the sciences, the application is clear, but it's not limited to books involving equations. Experts also question whether studying material via e-texts as opposed to traditional books affects our reading comprehension on a higher level (like our ability to make inferences and extrapolate).

In the midst of this ongoing debate comes Athabasca University's new e-text initiative: to eventually change all course texts to e-texts.

It's ironic that AU, long known for accommodating students requiring ultimate flexibility, is implementing a program that in practice is quite inflexible. Currently, e-text-only courses are limited to a selection, but as the initiative continues to roll out, students will receive only e-texts in course materials packages. No hard text option will be directly available.

Although students are not prohibited from purchasing textbooks or printing out hard copies of the e-books (at the cost of paper and ink, it might be preferable to purchase a text), the university will only subsidize the e-text. Since students are already paying for their course texts as part of the tuition package, the "choice" to find and purchase hard copies of texts is essentially a choice to pay double.

In addition to cost issues and personal study habits, there are a myriad of other considerations, including online/offline features, limited-duration accessibility, visual issues, and more. In the next few weeks, we'll discuss these in further detail and speak with students about their concerns over how the move to e-texts will affect them. If you feel passionate about this, make your voice heard! Email us at voice@voicemagazine.org and tell us about your biggest e-text concern.

IN CONVERSATION

Wanda Waterman



Photo: Ricardo Hubbs

Sienna Dahlen

*Sienna Dahlen is a Toronto-based singer-songwriter and teacher with a Master's degree in jazz performance from the University of Toronto. She's toured the world and has collaborated with a number of notable artists, including Karl Jannuska, Mads Baerentzen, and Wassim Soubra. She recently released her album *Verglas*—a set of original and innovative songs beautifully arranged and masterfully rendered—and will be performing at the Savoy du Métropolis as part of the Montreal International Jazz Festival June 28 and 29. Recently she took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about how her art developed and where it's taking her.*

Becoming a Songwriter

Sienna's very first songwriting venture was a little tune called "West Wind," which she penned around the age of 14. But she didn't start composing in earnest until she had finished her Bachelor's degree in jazz at McGill.

"I was searching for my writing voice," she says, "one that could combine elements of jazz and popular music, among other styles. Immediately after hearing Jane Siberry that summer at the Montreal Jazz Festival, I experienced an epiphany and the creative juices began to flow. I was blown away by the beauty and uniqueness of her music and her voice. I haven't looked back since."

Developing as a Musician

Fortunately, by the time she arrived at this point Sienna had already developed advanced skills as a musician. Even before studying music at the university level, she'd spent years playing the alto sax and singing in choirs and later venturing into solo voice.

"Singing as a solo voice was a complete revelation for me. I had never explored melody in such a direct and meaningful way, and I have Laura Cardriver, my high school music teacher, to thank for that. Performing 'Freddy, My Love' in our production of *Grease* that year for my family and friends was exhilarating, to say the least! I should also add that my dad has been a big influence and we've always had a wonderful musical connection."

Listening to Sienna's amazing voice makes you wonder if she's among the gifted few.

"I don't have perfect pitch," she humbly confesses. "I have the gift of being able to sing, most of the time, perfectly in pitch, but I can't identify the names of pitches without the aid of an instrument. My relative pitch is pretty good, though."

The Elements of a Song Worth Singing

These days, unlike many jazz singers, Sienna doesn't devote much time to interpreting standards. "I don't often sing music written by other people unless I've had a hand in writing it," she points out. "In the past, I used to sing a lot of standard jazz material, and ballads were always my weakness. I loved pouring myself into those luscious chords and melodies and still do from time to time! In general, though, I like to collaborate with people who challenge me in some way. I really appreciate composers who force me to think and perform outside of my comfort zone."

"Great music is great music. I actually don't listen to jazz very much, though. I prefer to hear it live. My playlists include everyone from Bon Iver to Thom Yorke's newest album. I always wanted to be a rock star, if the truth be known."

"Through the center of the night

Burst a voice so full of life

Primal whisper laced with pain

Bled right through the icy rain . . ."

from "Verglas," by Sienna Dahlen



Photo: Ricardo Hubbs

The Joy of Collaboration

In 2011, Sienna participated in a creation residency in Patagonia, Argentina, presenting her music with the visual art of Nadine Bariteau. It was a fulfilling experience.

"For a moment I was able to wear the hat of a sound and performance artist rather than just a singer-songwriter. Collaborating with a visual artist and being surrounded by other artists working in differing mediums also provided much inspiration and guidance. The project that I created there taught me to hear the music of my environment in ways that I'd never explored previously."

Back home, Karl Jannuska is her favourite musical collaborator: "Not only is he one of my dearest, oldest friends, but we also love playing and writing music together, and we respect each other's work immensely."

Art of the Minimal

Sienna's lyrics, in English or French, are beautifully crafted little codes, spare and poetic. Does this style of writing come naturally to her, or was it long in developing?

"With time, most artists are able to carve away that which no longer needs to be said or shown," she says. "Lyric writing is difficult to do well at the best of times, and the masters of that art can speak volumes in a short amount of space and sound."

What conditions does she need in order to be able to keep on creating?

"Extended periods of silence," she replies, "foreign environments, and often some sort of drama in my life!"

DID YOU KNOW?

Convocation



Are you graduating this spring, but couldn't make it out to Athabasca this weekend? Whether you're mentally walking across that stage or you're just curious about the whole process and want a preview of your own big day, Athabasca University's [Convocation page](#) is your clearinghouse for information about Convocation weekend.

The page, maintained by the University, includes information on daily schedules; how to order memorabilia or graduation portraits; and what to expect in terms of dress, academic regalia, and more.

And it's more than just text: you can also access live streaming of Convocation ceremonies, starting at 12 pm MST each day.

[Video coverage](#) from past years is also available, and you can check out the [photo galleries](#) from prior Convocations.


And whether you attended Convocation in person or followed along online, we want to hear from you! As part of our Convocation coverage, we'd like to talk with members of the Class of 2013 about their journey to graduation—and the next step.

Contact voice@voicemagazine.org for more details!

OVERHEARD



I LIKE SARTRE
BECAUSE OF HIS
INTELLECTUAL
INTEGRITY.

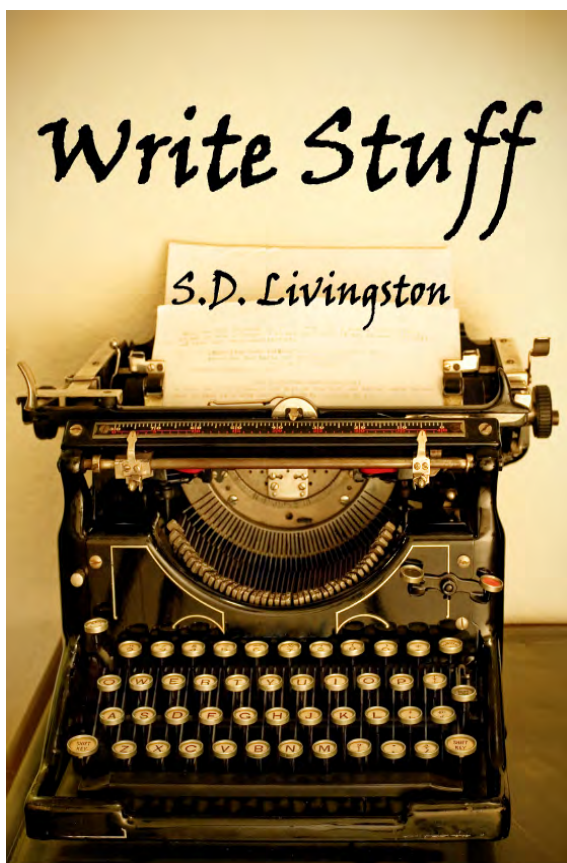


AND I LIKE WOOLF
BECAUSE OF HER
FEMINIST STREAM-
OF-CONSCIOUSNESS
PERSPECTIVE.



BUT I'D GIVE MY
KITTEN HEELS
FOR A NEW
VIOLET
WINSPEAR
NOVEL!

WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN



All's Fair in Love and Fiction

All might be fair in love and war, but is it fair in fiction? Certain officials in the Philippines don't think so, especially not when it comes to Dan Brown's latest thriller, *Inferno*, which paints an unflattering picture of Manila. But does fiction have an obligation to mimic reality?

The fuss over *Inferno* has to do with Brown's portrayal of Manila, the Philippine capital, as a place of corruption, poverty, filth, and a thriving sex trade. One of the book's characters, Sienna, describes it as a city of "six-hour traffic jams, suffocating pollution [and] horrifying sex trade." She characterizes her experience as having "run through the gates of hell."

Francis Tolentino, Metro Manila's chairman, hasn't taken Dan Brown's artistic licence too well. As the *Guardian* [reports](#), Tolentino wrote an open letter to Brown, expressing his disappointment at the best-selling author's "inaccurate

portrayal of our beloved metropolis." Specifically, Tolentino objects to Brown's use of Manila "as a venue and source of a character's breakdown and trauma, much more her disillusionment in humanity."

There are actually a couple of different aspects to Tolentino's complaint. One, an author's fictional portrayal of a real city; and two, the fact that the author used that city as a key part of a character's breakdown. On both counts, Tolentino has missed the mark by a mile. Or, more accurately, by about three thousand years.

Even before the first recorded legend, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, poets and playwrights have been making up stories about the world. Some of those tales stick close to facts and some are pure fiction. But all of them have to take place somewhere, whether it's the river Styx in the underworld or Mount Olympus high in the heavens.

Eventually, though, things would get pretty boring if those were the only two settings writers used. Sure, there's always outer space and the *USS Enterprise*, but not every modern author wants to write science fiction. So most writers spin tales around what they know—real places right here on earth. Which means that for centuries, just about every metropolis and backwater you can think of has been used as the setting for a book.

Fair enough, but should authors be allowed to portray, say, Salt Lake City, Utah, as a den of iniquity? Of course they should. Fiction exists for many reasons. It's a way of explaining the world, of exploring that

world, of entertaining us, of making us think. For all those reasons and more, fiction blends fantasy and reality in myriad ways. Unlike journalism or memoir, fiction's under no obligation to stick to the facts.

Just as Mario Puzo was free to set the crime and corruption of *The Godfather* in New York and Manhattan (among other places), so John Ball could place *In the Heat of the Night*, a novel about hatred and racism, in small-town Mississippi.

Even more interesting, those plots and settings could just as easily have been reversed. Good, evil, and the spectrum in between exist everywhere. Fictional characters find redemption in prisons while others hide their crimes behind the respectability of a church.

In the case of Manila and *Inferno*, perhaps what has Tolentino so upset is that Dan Brown comes uncomfortably close to the truth in this particular piece of fiction. In a city of close to 13 million inhabitants, almost half of them—43 per cent—live in slums. Crime, poverty, and a devastating sex trade are, indeed, rampant, and this [article](#) in the *Independent Business Times* has both videos and statistics on the issues.

So instead of protesting Dan Brown's fictional tale, Mr. Tolentino might want to take a closer look at those statistics. Because the facts about his city make for some interesting reading, too.

S.D. Livingston is the author of several books, including the new suspense novel Kings of Providence. Visit her [website](#) for information on her writing (and for more musings on the literary world!).

WRITE FOR US!

What topics and issues do you want to see covered in *The Voice*? What type of features do you like best? *The Voice* wants to hear from you! Email us at voice@voicemagazine.org with your ideas, letters, and suggestions.

And if you've got something to say about university life, or life in general, consider writing for *The Voice Magazine*. We're always seeking new voices and fresh perspectives—and submissions from our readers are welcome! To find out more about becoming a *Voice* writer, email the editors at voice@voicemagazine.org.

All accepted submissions are purchased as freelance pieces and cannot have been published elsewhere (including online in any way) or written as academic papers.

THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



Books, Music, and Film to Wake Up Your Muse and Help You Change the World

Film: **Mea Maxima Culpa: Silence in the House of God**

Director: Alex Gibney

Genre: Documentary

“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!”

Jesus, quoted in Matthew 18: 6-7

In the End It’s the Silent Who Abolish Silence

No, it’s not your typical feel-good summer entertainment. But in spite of reams of sickening discoveries and shocking revelations, you do come away from it with a sense of hope.

At first you think only extremely rare specimens of depravity are at fault, those dirty, snivelling people Mom won’t let you talk to. Then you find out it’s been happening at your local residential school, parish, or home for the disabled. Then you find out it’s happening all over your state or province. Then you find out it’s happening all over your country. Then you find out it’s been happening in every country in the world.

Then you find out the Vatican knew about it all along and hushed it up and continued to put offending priests in positions of trust.

You think perhaps it’s a modern epidemic that the Vatican just wasn’t ready for, but no—there are records of the Vatican being made aware of pedophilia within the church as early as 400 A.D. Almost two millennia and they hadn’t budged an inch toward dealing with the problem until, surprise, surprise, ordinary Catholics joined with secular elements in society to call them to account.

Wrenching Open the Can of Worms

In the 1960s, pedophilia was old news. But publicly condemning it just didn’t happen until a group of

young men who'd attended St. John's School for the Deaf in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, decided that for the protection of students, Father Lawrence Murphy needed to be removed from his position as head of the school.

Many of Father Murphy's abuse victims hadn't been able to tell their parents that the priest had been molesting them because their parents couldn't understand American Sign Language, but some nonetheless found interpreters to help them. Some parents were angry at their children for suggesting a Roman Catholic priest could do such a thing, but others believed their children and took steps to have Father Murphy removed. All to no avail; other priests who were told of the abuse and reported it were quickly silenced.

But Terry Kohut, Gary Smith, Pat Kuehn, Bob Bolger, and other former students had been sparked by a larger cultural climate in which authority was being challenged and the marginalized were demanding their rights. They continued their campaign. At events put on at the school, they would place wanted posters with Father Murphy's face on the windshields of those being importuned for donations for the school. In the end they pushed their lawsuits all the way to the Vatican, and a very reluctant Vatican was finally held accountable.

"In the end, if the church is anything, it's a body of true believers. Any system that aims to control, exploit, and victimize this body is simply an imposter. We can only hope and pray that such imposters' days are numbered."

You'd think a film like this would come off as being anti-Catholic, but it's not. What the film does condemn are power structures, hierarchies, and systems of privilege that allow leaders to indulge in and tolerate the worst forms of hypocrisy imaginable. (Those of us brought up in the Protestant church have no right to be smug. Our lack of central authority makes us harder to sue, but no less guilty of crimes and cover-ups.)

In the end, if the church is anything, it's a body of true believers. Any system that aims to control, exploit, and victimize this body is simply an imposter. We can only hope and pray that such imposters' days are numbered.

There's a moving scene in which Bob Bolger goes to the woodland retreat of the now retired Father Murphy and confronts him in his own yard. While Father Murphy dismisses him and walks into his house, Bob signs frantically, struggling to express his rage in his limited speech, insisting, again and again: "No! You go to prison! Now!"

He could just as well have been addressing the system that has ripped the innocence from the hearts of millions of children for centuries, winning their trust only to betray it, using them as sexual objects while filling them with an unnatural sense of shame regarding normal human sexuality.

Somehow even more frightening than the sexual predators are the "good" people who protected and enabled the predators. Sexual exploitation is not about normal sexual desires— it's about exercising an unlawful power. The silencing of victims and their families served only one purpose: to help church

authorities hold onto the massive degree of control they'd mustered in the name of the Master they'd refused to obey.

Mea Maxima Culpa manifests five of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence; 2) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 3) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 4) it gives me tools of kindness, enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; and 5) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action.

Wanda also penned the poems for the artist book They Tell My Tale to Children Now to Help Them to be Good, a collection of meditations on fairy tales, illustrated by artist Susan Malmstrom.

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Get a Job

So you've graduated—congratulations!—and now comes the fun part. Well, maybe not so much fun. In today's economy, getting a job or applying for a promotion is a full-time job in itself, and certainly a frustrating and stressful one. Check out these links for inspiration and helpful tips.

Social Media

Social Media is the big bad wolf of job seeking—or is it? Not according to this *Harvard Business Review* article, which discusses how to make social media work for you. Used properly, these resources can help you make contacts, spread your portfolio, and land interviews and, eventually, jobs.

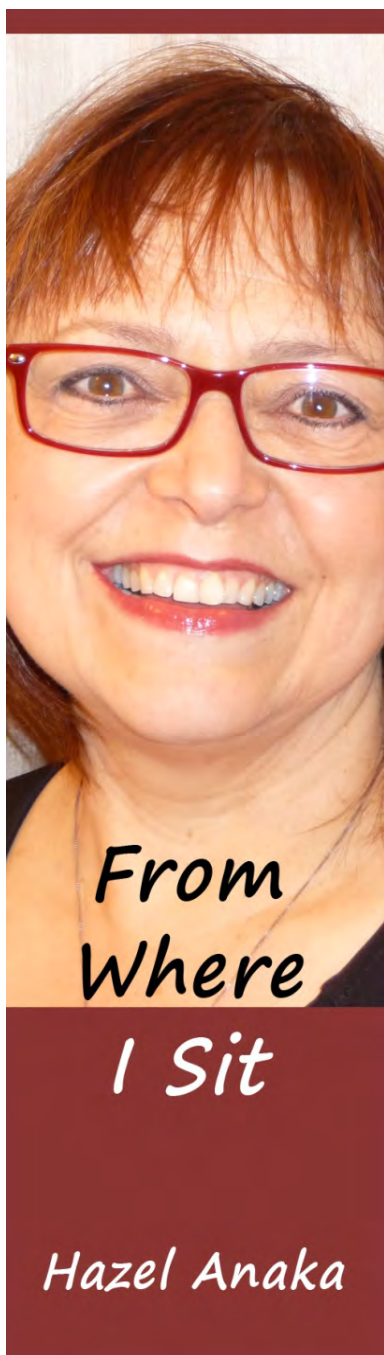
Creativity Pays Off

Don't be too original, job applicants are warned; most would-be employers frown upon resumes that seem gimmicky or just too clever. And yet these job applicants took the risk, and their creativity and knowledge of the employer resulted in a hiring. Click through for some inspiration!

Back to Basics

All the creativity in the world won't get you very far, though, if you approach the job market without a plan. The *Huffington Post* gives some solid advice for organizing your job hunt.





Not Likely

In the May 29 issue of the *Edmonton Journal* there appeared a half-page photo story with the headline, “Chinese teen defaces Egyptian temple art.”

The story has since appeared on TV. In a nutshell, a 15-year-old boy from Nanjing, China scratched, “Ding Jinhao visited here” onto the wall of a 3,500-year-old temple.

The vandalism got international attention when another Chinese tourist posted a photo of the damage on a blog with these comments: “My saddest moment in Egypt. Ashamed and unable to show my face.” That led to thousands of comments and the identification of the teen. Since then a journalist with Shanghai Television, the communist *People’s Daily* newspaper, and Wang Yang, Deputy Premier, have weighed in.

Even more newsworthy to me is the public apology from the boy’s father. He said, “The child has committed a mistake and the main responsibility falls on the adults. It was because we did not supervise him well, and have not taught him well.”

That sounds suspiciously like a parent taking responsibility. Will wonders never cease? Does anyone remember a North American parent doing likewise? Not me.

This hits pretty close to home, as Roy is contemplating laying assault charges with the RCMP. Recently he confronted four youth trespassing on our land, and the encounter wasn’t pleasant. Using dirt bikes and quads, they had snuck onto our land and were having fun ripping around our gravel pit. With huge open pits filled with water as deep as 18 feet, we were acutely aware of the danger. Driving bikes up the side of piles as tall as 25 feet could lead to a rollover.

They refused to provide their names or explain why they were trespassing. They seemed dumbfounded at the suggestion that this was wrong. Roy had the foresight to take their photos with his iPhone. They had no license plates. No one apologized or expressed remorse.

In fact, the oldest was yappy and disrespectful. When he covered Roy with a spray of gravel as he tore away, it became a police matter. The RCMP have identified and talked to him and are recommending charges. Apparently “this apple didn’t fall far from the tree.” Not likely to get parental responsibility here, from where I sit.

Hazel Anaka’s first novel is *Lucky Dog*. Visit her [website](#) for more information or follow her on Twitter @anakawrites.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Game Over

With aggressive parents causing trouble on the ballfields and arenas of little league sports, coaches and officials are exercising their authority and trying to keep control of the game. But sometimes they take things a bit too far, as one Ottawa soccer mom found out recently.

As the *Ottawa Sun* [reports](#), Zita Oliveria and her 10-year-old son, Noa, were “kicked off a soccer field” after refusing to agree to “take shelter under trees during a thunderstorm.”

During an evening game last week, thunder and lightning caused play to be suspended. The coaches “decided to round the kids up under the trees bordering the field.” Oliveria refused due to safety concerns, and remained with her son, away from the trees.

She was harassed by several coaches, who told her she had to go and join everyone else; some accused her of breaking the law and being “irrational and difficult.” Eventually she was informed that she had to leave the field since she would not do as she was told.

The “outraged” mom is “shocked and concerned that so many people didn’t consider the dangers of hiding under a tree when lightning is nearby.”

Around the World: Special Delivery

Fines. Signs posting regulations. “Stoop and scoop” stations in public parks. DNA-testing dog excrement. And remote-controlled dog poop that chases irresponsible owners who don’t stop to clean up after their pets. Think you’ve seen it all when it comes to dealing with dog owners who won’t keep the community clean? Think again—one town near Madrid came up with an innovative plan to reduce the problem.

As the *Telegraph* [reports](#), the town of Brunete, Spain, mailed dog excrement to offending owners in “in a box branded with town hall insignia and marked ‘Lost Property’ and delivered by courier to the pet owners home.”

Volunteers kept watch for “dog owners who failed to scoop,” later speaking casually with the owner and discovering the name of the dog. That information, together with the dog’s breed, was enough to “identify the owner from the registered pet database held in the town hall,” a council spokesperson told reporters.

It worked: the town “has since reported a 70 per cent drop in the amount of dog mess found in its streets.”

AUSU UPDATE



Dear Members,

You may have recently seen information on the internet speculating about the future of Athabasca University. These reports suggest that the Alberta government may broker a merger between AU and University of Alberta, and that this may result in drastic changes to the services and programs offered to students AU students.

We want you to know that AUSU is aware of these rumours and is actively investigating the source – we will keep you informed as we know more.

We can tell you that AU is governed via a bicameral structure with two main governing bodies: the General Faculties Council (formerly Academic Council) and the Board of Governors (formerly Governing Council). AUSU has representatives on both of these governing bodies and we can confirm that there has been no formal discussion of a university merger among these groups. The AU president, Frits Pannekoek, has also assured the press that there is no truth to the rumour. On behalf of our members, we are seeking more information from the Board of Governors, the minister, and AU executives.

At this time we simply have no evidence that a merger is being seriously considered by AU, the U of A, or the Alberta government, and we note that among the many committees and working groups of AU, planning and development for the future continues as usual.

We know that our members are worried and want more information. We will update you as soon as we know more. At this time we do not feel there is any reason for students to worry or make changes to their study plans.

Do not hesitate to contact our office if you wish to talk about this or any other issue affecting AU students.

AUSU.

This column is provided by AUSU to facilitate communication with its members. *The Voice* does not write or edit this section; all content has been exclusively and directly provided by AUSU, and any questions or comments about the material should be directed to ausu@ausu.org.

CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@voicemagazine.org for more information.

THE VOICE

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Publisher Athabasca University Students' Union
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www.voicemagazine.org

The Voice is published every Friday in HTML and PDF format.

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org.

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